

ROADS TO RECOVERY

NEWSLETTER

Created by Dual Recovery at Warren Washington Association for Mental Health to support individuals in recovery

*A newsletter for you
and about you*



SPOTLIGHT TOPIC

A Sense of Belonging

Since the pandemic started with the quarantining, isolation, and social distancing, people have become more aware of the need for a sense of belonging. We long for time with friends, family, and colleagues. We miss socializing and hugs. We are hardwired for connection; without it we struggle. Our emotional wellbeing depends on that sense of belonging.

For some of us that feel like we are 'different'; sadly, this is hardly a new concept. People with substance use disorder, a mental health condition, or that are part of the LGBTQIA+ population are at the top of that list. Some truly have been ostracized. Others may have family and friends who love them but still feel they lack a place of belonging. Granted, these individuals' families and friends may not see it as a fact that they are alone, but the feelings are very real none the less. Many of us have longed for that sense of belonging, a social identity, since long before the pandemic came along.

The pandemic started over two and a half years ago and although some of the social restrictions have begun to ease up, that is still a long time. How have you been holding up? Are you comfortable being in social settings yet? With family and friends, going out to dinner or church, going to the grocery store, or a concert? Many still are not. The elderly and those with compromised immune systems are still on high alert.

The MMRW (Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report) of August 14, 2020 states that 40.9% of 5,470 respondents who completed surveys during June reported an adverse mental or behavioral health condition, including those who reported symptoms of anxiety disorder or depressive disorder (30.9%), those with symptoms of trauma- and stressor-related disorder (TSRD) related to the pandemic (26.3%), those who reported having started or increased substance use to cope with stress or emotions related to COVID-19 (13.3%), and those who reported having seriously considered suicide in the preceding 30 days (10.7%).

This was a survey done only three months into the pandemic! Since then, mental health conditions have declined for many, suicide rates have gone up, substance use disorders and overdoses have increased, and the rate of domestic violence has increased. People feel more alone now than perhaps ever in history.

We all need that feeling of belonging, that feeling of connectedness to a group or community, the sense that you're a part of something and feel attached, close, and thoroughly accepted by your people, a set of shared beliefs or ideals, a social identity.

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A Sense of Belonging (Con't)

This is why it is so vital that there are AA, NA, or other recovery meetings, social groups or clubs (like East Side Center), community groups (such as the LGBTQIA+ have), and church for many.

So, the next time you're feeling a little distanced or disconnected from your social supports, remember we are all struggling through this, some more so than others. You are not alone. With today's social issues there really is no room for judgement, prejudice, and hate. We are all human with the same feelings and often similar struggles – we need to connect, support, and love one another. Do as much as you are comfortable with within the CDC (Center for Disease Control) guidelines. Pick up the phone and call someone else who might be struggling too. Meet with family or friends in a small group. Go to lunch with a friend. Initiating a conversation or invitation to get together with someone else is probably just as vital for him or her as it is for you, so don't hesitate.

UNDERSTANDING THE DIAGNOSIS

Suicidal Behavior



BY GINGER MILLER

In December 2021 the American Psychiatric Association announced the new diagnoses that would be added to the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) being released in March 2022, including suicidal behavior. The suicidal behavior code appears in the Section II chapter "Other Conditions That May Be a Focus of Clinical Attention." This chapter features conditions and problems that are not mental disorders in themselves, but for which it is useful to have a systematic way of recording—for researchers, because it can help them track prevalence and correlates, and for clinicians, because these conditions may warrant ongoing clinical attention. The suicidal behavior symptom code can be used for individuals who have engaged in potentially self-injurious behavior with at least some intent to die as a result of the act. Evidence of intent to end their life can be explicit or inferred from the behavior or circumstances.

An article in Theravive, written by David Porter, MD, LADC, explains further that suicidal behavior as a condition independent of depression or other mental disorders is a paradigm shift, as suicidal ideation, attempts, and successful attempts were defined as behaviors associated with mood and other mental disorders. It is noted that about 10% of people who commit suicide do not have a mental illness, and most people who have depression or another mood disorder do not attempt suicide (Reardon, 2013).

Need Support Now?

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org



Symptoms for Suicidal Behavior diagnosis. There are five criteria for a Suicidal Behavior diagnosis, with two specifiers.

- 1.The individual has made a suicide attempt within the past two years.
- 2.The criterion for non-suicidal self-injurious behavior is not met during the suicide attempts.
- 3.The diagnosis is not applied to preparation for a suicide attempt, or suicidal ideation.
- 4.the act was not attempted during an altered mental state, such as delirium or "confusion".
- 5.The act was not ideologically motivated- e.g. - religious or political.

Other specifiers are:

- Current- Not more than 12- 24 months since last attempt.
- In Remission- more than 24 months since last attempt. (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).



IS THIS MEETING FOR YOU?

BY GINGER MILLER



There are numerous options today for meetings and support groups, probably more than the average person realizes. In the first article this month we discussed how important the sense of belonging is, that place or community where we feel comfortable and accepted for who we are. Each month we will review a different meeting describing what the meeting is like and what it is about. Our hope is that each of you will find one or more of these interesting enough to look into personally and perhaps find more support, maybe even your place of belonging, your community, your people. These articles might be something you'll decide to keep on hand in case you meet someone else searching for support as well.

Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.)



This is probably one of the most known support meetings and yet there are many people who are unfamiliar with or have a slightly skewed understanding of what it actually is. By their own definition, “A.A. has been helping alcoholics recover for more than 80 years. A.A.’s program of recovery is built on the simple foundation of one alcoholic sharing with another.” Membership at the group level is open to all who have a desire to recover from alcoholism. There are no dues, fees, requirements, or restrictions of any kind. There’s no formal application to join a group. The purpose of all meetings is for A.A. members to “share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.” The meetings are peer lead groups. Individuals are encouraged to recognize that it is a “we” program as a reminder of their admission of not being able to control alcohol. The A.A. organization is one in purpose and known worldwide. A.A. is a 12-step program. Members use the Twelve steps to maintain sobriety. A.A. is not a religious organization; however, the Twelve Steps are a set of spiritual principles. Members are encouraged to find a “Higher Power”, whoever or whatever that might be, as an emotional support and/or guidance on the path of recovery. When the Twelve Steps are practiced as a way of life, they can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to recover from alcoholism.

The Alcoholics Anonymous Book, fondly referred to by its members as ‘The Big Book’, was first released in 1939 – just four years after A.A. began. The book was written by the cofounder of Alcoholics Anonymous, Bill Wilson, and several of the original group members. The first 146 pages provide support and guidance helping individuals understand more about alcoholism and their solution to getting sober. The remainder of the book is comprised of short stories about some of the earlier members: what their life was like before getting sober, how they got sober, and what their life was like after getting sober.

Groups use the Twelve Traditions to stay unified. Two of A.A.’s traditions address anonymity. The Eleventh Tradition states that our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films (and now days, social media). The Twelfth Tradition says that Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities. Anonymity is often referred to as the greatest single protection the Fellowship has to assure its continued existence and growth. In stressing the equality of all A.A. members — and unity in the common bond of their recovery from alcoholism — anonymity serves as the spiritual foundation of A.A.



Alcoholics Anonymous Con't

There are a variety of formats for A.A. meetings and each meeting takes on the feel of their local area; so don't judge AA as a whole based on the first meeting you might attend. The most common meetings are discussion meetings where you will hear members talk about what drinking did to them and to those around them. Most also share what actions they took to stop drinking and how they are living their lives today. There are also speaker meetings where only a select one or two members share a more detailed version of their life. Literature meetings use one of the books approved by Alcoholics Anonymous Organization. Members take turns reading a portion of the book and sharing their experiences as related to what was read. Beginner meetings focus on the first three steps. A.A. groups have both open and closed meetings. Closed meetings are for A.A. members only, or for those who have a drinking problem and "have a desire to stop drinking." Open meetings are available to anyone interested in Alcoholics Anonymous' program of recovery from alcoholism. Non-alcoholics may attend open meetings as observers. At both types of meetings, the A.A. chairperson may request that participants confine their discussion to matters pertaining to recovery from alcoholism. Whether open or closed, A.A. group meetings are conducted by A.A. members who determine the format of their meetings.

For more information on Alcoholics Anonymous visit <https://www.aa.org/> If you would like to find a list of local meetings or online meetings please visit <https://www.aa.org/find-aa>

HEALTH & WELLNESS

The Alcohol and Cancer Link

BY GINGER MILLER



October is also Breast Cancer Awareness Month. This holds a special spot in my heart as I have had one of my grandmothers and my mother-in-law (with whom I was very close to) passed away due to breast cancer. Neither of them had a substance use disorder but, it did get me thinking about a young lady I was in an out-patient group with who was fighting cancer as well. She passed away one month after getting sober; this for some reason caught me off guard at the time and brought back many memories that I struggled with for a short while. I later lost a sponsor due to cancer as well. I wondered how much of a connection there might be between alcohol and cancer. I did my research primarily through The American Cancer Society.

According to The American Cancer Society, alcohol use is one of the most important preventable risk factors for cancer, along with tobacco use and excess body weight. Alcohol use accounts for about 6% of all cancers and 4% of all cancer deaths in the United States. Yet many people don't know about the link between alcohol use and cancer. Alcohol has been linked with many types of cancer including mouth, throat, voice box, esophagus, liver, colon and rectum, and breast. Alcohol probably also increases the risk of cancer of the stomach, and might affect the risk of some other cancers as well. For each of these cancers, the more alcohol you drink, the higher your cancer risk. But for some types of cancer, most notably breast cancer, consuming even small amounts of alcohol can increase risk.

Cancers of the mouth, throat, voice box, and esophagus: Alcohol use clearly raises the risk of these cancers. Drinking and smoking together raises the risk of these cancers many times more than drinking or smoking alone. This might be



Alcohol and Cancer (Con't)

because alcohol can help harmful chemicals in tobacco get inside the cells that line the mouth, throat, and esophagus. Alcohol may also limit how these cells can repair damage to their DNA caused by the chemicals in tobacco.

Liver cancer: Long-term alcohol use has been linked to an increased risk of liver cancer. Regular, heavy alcohol use can damage the liver, leading to inflammation and scarring, which might be why it raises the risk of liver cancer.

Colon and rectal cancer: Alcohol use has been linked with a higher risk of cancers of the colon and rectum. The evidence for this is generally stronger in men than in women, but studies have found the link in both sexes.

Breast cancer: Drinking even small amounts of alcohol is linked with an increased risk of breast cancer in women. Alcohol can raise estrogen levels in the body, which may explain some of the increased risk. Avoiding or cutting back on alcohol may be an important way for many women to lower their risk of breast cancer.

Other damage: Alcohol can act as an irritant. Cells that are damaged by the alcohol may try to repair themselves, which could lead to DNA changes that can be a step toward cancer. Once in the body, alcohol can be converted into chemicals that can damage cells as well as the DNA inside cells and this has been shown to cause cancer in lab animals.

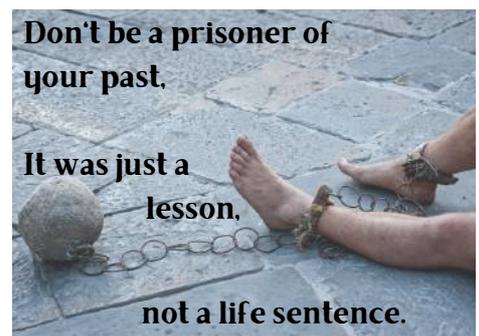
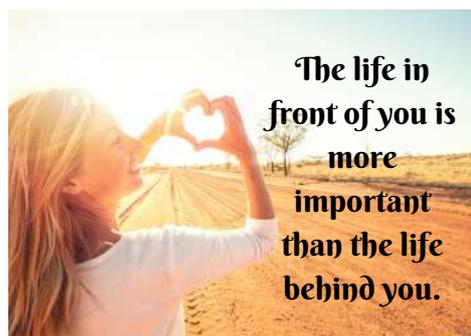


Alcohol might also affect the body's ability to absorb some nutrients, such as folate, that the body needs to stay healthy. Absorption of nutrients can be even worse in heavy drinkers. Low folate levels may play a role in the risk of some cancers, such as breast and colorectal cancer. Alcohol can raise the levels of estrogen, a hormone important in the growth and development of breast tissue. This could affect a woman's risk of breast cancer. Over time,

heavy drinking can cause inflammation (hepatitis) and heavy scarring (cirrhosis) in the liver. This can lead to liver failure. As liver cells try to repair the damage, they can end up with mistakes in their DNA which could lead to cancer. Heavy drinking can also damage other organs, such as the pancreas and the brain, and can raise blood pressure. It also increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. In pregnant women, alcohol use, especially heavy drinking, may lead to birth defects or other problems with the fetus.

INSPIRATION & MOTIVATION

3 Things to Remember to Help You Move Forward:





THE FUN SPOT

Brain Teasers

1. Forrest left home running. He ran a ways and then turned left, ran the same distance and turned left again, ran the same distance and turned left again. When he got home, there were two masked men. Who were they?
2. You are in a place called Willy's World and there is only one law. There is a mirror, but no reflection. There is pizza with cheese, but not sausage. There is pepper, but no salt. There is a door, yet no entrance or exit. What is the law?
3. What do an island and the letter "t" have in common?
4. What is unusual about the following words: revive, banana, grammar, voodoo, assess, potato, dresser, uneven?
5. Which tire doesn't move when a car turns right?
6. What is at the end of a rainbow?
7. In a one-story pink house, there was a pink person, a pink cat, a pink fish, a pink computer, a pink chair, a pink table, a pink phone, a pink shower – everything was pink! What color were the stairs?
8. Imagine you are in a room full of water. There are no windows or doors. How do you get out?



Brain Teaser Answers

1. The catcher and the umpire.
2. Each word in Willy's World must contain double letters.
3. They are both in the middle of water.
4. Take the first letter of each word and place it at the end. It will spell the same word backward.
5. The spare tire.
6. The letter 'W'.
7. There were no stairs. It was a one-story house.
8. Stop imagining.

WWAMH FARMER'S MARKET IS NOW OPEN

We are currently offering produce as it becomes available. All produce is first come, first served, so be sure to get your orders in as soon as possible! Staff and members are encouraged to have orders in by FRIDAY for pick-up at reception at 230 Maple Street on either MONDAY or TUESDAY between 12:00 and 3:00.

- Rhubarb (5 stalks) - \$1.00
- Bell Peppers - .50
- Pablano Peppers - \$1.00
- Greenbeans (small bundle) - .50
- Egg Plant - \$1.00
- Tomatoes - Slicing or Saucing variety - .50
- Potatoes (Yukon & Red Skin) - .50
- Fresh Basil (2 ft Stalk) - \$1.00
- Dried Herbs (Oregano, Dill or Mint) - \$1.00

Please reach out to Kayleigh Winnie at kwinnie@wwamh.org to place orders and specify a pickup date.



RECOVERY

Resources

WEBSITES

- Al-Anon and Ala-teen Groups** – Hope and help for families and friends of alcoholics: al-anon.org
- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)** - Local group schedule and information: district13.aahmbny.org
- Celebrate Recovery (CR)** – Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-centered, 12-Step recovery program for anyone struggling with hurt, pain or addiction of any kind: celebraterecovery.com
- Debtors Anonymous** - Debtors Anonymous offers hope for people whose use of unsecured debt causes problems and suffering in their lives and the lives of others: debtorsanonymous.org
- Digital Recovery Support** -Online recovery support groups are available daily. They are open to anyone who is dealing with substance use, mental health conditions, and any other quality of life concerns. Meetings are led by peer recovery support specialists who have firsthand experience and understand what you're going through: www.recoveryanswers.org
- Gamblers Anonymous (GA)** – Online services for anyone struggling with a gambling addiction: gasteps.org
- Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP)** – For those who have lost someone to substance use or addiction: grasphelp.org
- In the rooms** - A global online recovery community who share their strength and experience with one another daily through live meetings, discussion groups, and other tools in the rooms: intherooms.com
- My Recovery** – Online 12-step meetings: myrecovery.com
- Narcotics Anonymous (NA)** - local group schedule and information: narcotics.com
- Overeaters Anonymous (OA)** – Online support groups for anyone who wants to stop eating compulsively: oarecovery.com
- The Phoenix** – Recovery community organization offering daily live stream cross-fit, yoga and meditation every two hours through the COVID Crisis: thephoenix.org

PHONE NUMBERS

- The Trevor Project** - Support for youth in crisis: thetrevorproject.org/hotline: 866-488-7386
- International Bipolar Association Crisis Line**: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders Helpline**: 630-577-1330
- National Center for PTSD Helpline**: 1-800-273-8255
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**: Hotline staff are prepared to answer any mental health questions you may have. You can also text NAMI to 741741 for free support. (800) 950-NAMI (6264)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**: Available 24/7, 365 days a year: (800) 662-HELP (4357). The professionals on the phone can provide treatment information and referrals in English and Spanish.
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)**: Available 8:30am to 5pm EST: (866) 615-6464 or (866) 415-8051 (TTY). Professionals can answer any mental health related questions in English or Spanish.
- Boys Town**: Specially trained counselors are available 24/7, 365 days a year to provide crisis support specifically for children and their families: (800) 448-3000
- Life Line Mental Health Crisis & Suicide Prevention - 988**

PODCASTS

- This Naked Mind** - Some of the episodes discuss alcohol withdrawals, the link between drinking and binge eating, how to deal with loneliness, and more.
- Recovery Rocks** - Our varied paths show listeners that there are a myriad paths to recovery and countless songs to rock out to along the way.
- Mental Health - Hope and Recovery** - They share inspirational true stories and a host of recovery skills. You'll learn about treatment options, coping skills, goal setting, relationships, and mindfulness.
- Mental Illness Happy Hour** - Weekly interviews with comedians, artists, friends, and the occasional doctor.; exploring mental illness, trauma, addiction and negative thinking.

APPS

- Addiction Apps**: Twenty-Four Hours A Day (Free), Quit That! Habit Tracker (Free), NoMo (Free)
- Counseling Apps**: TalkSpace (\$\$) BetterHelp (\$\$) Larkr (\$\$) ReGain (\$\$) TeenCounseling (\$\$)
- Suicide Prevention Apps**: MY3 (Free) notOK (Free)
- General Mental Health Apps**: What's Up (CBT; Free) Mood Kit (CBT; \$)
- Anxiety Apps**: MindShift (Free), Self-Help Anxiety Management – SAM (Free), CBT Thought Record Diary (Free)
- Bipolar Disorder Apps**: IMoodJournal (\$), EMoods (Free)
- Depression Apps**: Talk Space Online Therapy (\$\$), Happify (Free), MoodTools (CBT; Free)
- Eating Disorder Apps**: Recovery Record (Free), Rise Up & Recovery (Free), LifeSum (Free)
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Apps**: nOCD (Free), Worry Watch (\$), GG OCD (Free)
- PTSD Apps**: PTSD Coach (Free), Breathe2Relax (Free)
- Schizophrenia Apps**: UCSF Prime (Free), Schizophrenia Health Story Lines (Free)
- Mindfulness & Meditation Apps**: Headspace (\$), Calm (\$), Serenity: Guided Meditation & Mindfulness (Free)
- Wellness**: Wellness Recovery Action Plan (Goal Setting; Free)

THANKS FOR READING! :)

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBSCRIBE TO
OUR NEWSLETTERS, PLEASE EMAIL US
AT GMILLER@WWAMH.ORG
OR CALL 518-401-5991



WWAMH DUAL RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUPS

EVERY TUESDAY FROM
4:00-5:00 PM AT THE
HOPE & HEALING
RECOVERY CENTER:
2 MAPLE STREET, HUDSON FALLS
ATTEND IN PERSON OR
VIRTUALLY - ZOOM MEETING ID:
844-2214-0148

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